

It is concern over the powerlessness of the Council to act in the event of a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or an act of aggression involving one of the Great Powers, which has led some of the Members of the United Nations, including Canada, to seek other methods, within the Charter, of obtaining security for themselves and for other peace-loving peoples. In a statement before the General Assembly in Paris on September 28, the Chairman of the Canadian delegation, Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King said:¹

Security for individual nations, under such circumstances, can be assured only by the effective co-operation, and the united power of those nations whose determination to maintain their freedom constitutes a strong bond of community between them. It is not surprising therefore that certain nations, knowing that their security depends on collective action in some form, and which are not yet able to achieve that security on the universal basis which the United Nations contemplates, should, pending this large accomplishment, seek to achieve their security on a less than universal basis.

The Charter of the United Nations expressly bases security upon collective action by the Members of the Organization. This indeed is the first and principal purpose of the United Nations.

Article 51 of the Charter however recognizes the "inherent" right of self-defence collectively as well as individually "until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security".

The year 1948 has seen continuing efforts to establish pacts of collective self-defence within the United Nations so that nations, by exercising their right of self-defence against aggression under Article 51, may make preparations in advance to deter aggression. It is on this basis that the pact between the Brussels Powers (the United Kingdom, France and Benelux) was signed on March 17, 1948. Consultations also began in 1948 on a diplomatic level, between the representatives of the Brussels Powers and the United States and Canada, with a view to a pact of collective self-defence of the nations in the North Atlantic. The treaty of Rio de Janeiro, binding the republics of the Western Hemisphere to mutual defence against aggression (negotiated in August-September, 1947) became operative on December 3, 1948 upon its ratification by the required two-thirds of its participating states.

Another important consequence of the division of the world into Communist and non-Communist areas has been that during the year no progress towards agreement has been possible on the important questions of the international control of atomic energy and of general disarmament.

This year the Soviet Union, while continuing to press for the immediate banning of atomic bombs, also introduced a proposal at the third session of the General Assembly that the five Great Powers should, as a preliminary to general disarmament, immediately reduce their armaments and armed forces by one-third.

The Western Powers on the other hand, remembering the costly experience of unilateral disarmament by peace-loving states in the years

¹ For the full text of Mr. King's statement see Appendix I-A, pp. 199-203. See also statement of the Secretary of State for External Affairs in the House of Commons, April 29, 1948, Appendix I-B, pp. 204-206.